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Northwest China AF13
Sinkiang AI

[For information on the cadres - groups of especially-trained communist party officials employed in cooperatives and collectivization programs to train others in party programs - see category 668.]

S
N A group of patrilineally
563 related families forms the basic economic (i.e.? migrational)
621 unit in Mongol society. Pastures are distributed among such
S units. The structure of the society itself dictates a certain
N collectivistic working concept. Mongol social groupings are
[622] led by tribal chieftains, who are directly responsible to the
563 district Chinese official. Mongol society, unlike other North-
199 western societies, has not undergone great changes under
668 Communist influences. Their basic pattern of life has remained
the same as it was under the Manchu and Republican regimes.

S
563 The Oirats (or Western Mongols:
233 The Oirats of the Northwest are primarily pastoral nomads.
[434] Their chief source of income is cattle, horses, sheep and
[131] goats. Because they live in a desert-steppe area they move
around in larger or smaller groups depending upon the avail-
able resources.

S
563 The designation for these small economic and migrational
621 units or camps is "xotn" which includes a group of nuclear
[594] families patrilineally related - tracing descent from a common
[613] ancestor in the third, fourth, or fifth generation.

[597] Membership in this group can be gained by adoption, by
attachment of a daughter's husband in the case of a man
with no sons and of poor unrelated families or poor related
families on the paternal side. Although some poorer families
remained apart from these "xotn" it usually is more worth-
while to add their few cattle, etc., to that of the larger
group and render services in return for the benefits gained
S thereby.

[613] Among the Oirats the closer an individual's relationship
[554] to the ancestor, the greater prestige and status he enjoys in
this group.

S
563 The headman or elder ("axalaci") dwells in a tent situated in
361 the front of the encampment facing south. The remainder of
[622] the group is arranged according to the age of the male members
S in a circle behind the dwelling of the elder. The dependent
[613] families are situated in the rear of the circle but still according
[554] to the closeness of their relation to the ancestor.

563 Wives of members of these extended families are also
621 affected by the social set-up; their position and status varies
593 directly with that of their husbands, although a wife's position
562 as far as respect patterns go was never equal to her husband's.
A wife observes strict respect for her husband's kinsmen who
possess, by reason of age and relationship, a higher position
than that of her husband. Very often she will not even pronounce
the names of any of these elder gentlemen out of respect for
them. The status of the wife grows with that of her husband
during his lifetime. When he dies, she can either remain
living with his kinsmen, in which case she holds the same
position socially that he had during his lifetime, or she can

depends on his herds: they are his only resource, his only wealth, and his only pride. When two nomads meet, whether they are Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Mongols, or Tibetans, the first subject that comes up is their cattle. Among nomads, social status is established by the possession of horses, camels, and livestock in general, and only secondarily determined by titles or descent. This is especially true for the Kirghiz, Kazakhs and Tibetans, and to a lesser degree for the Mongols, among whom aristocratic birth (real or imagined) plays an important role.

The average nomad's life can be described as follows: he lives in a roomy felt tent, furnished with house altar, in the case of Buddhists, or with an artistically made book-stand for the Quran in the case of Muslims, and some chests and carpets. The whole family takes care of the livestock, and periodically the migration unit moves during the summer time from pasture to pasture, preserving the richest and most protected grazing land for the winter time. The weather plays a fatal role in the welfare of the nomad's livestock, and every so often a migration unit (the ail, the aul, the ayir, the omoq, otoq, xotn, or uruq, the ulus or even the aimaq) loses its livestock. In this case, those clans which still own enough livestock divide their herds and lend part of them to those who suffered the loss. Collective cooperation is exercised in this respect by Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Mongols, while the nomadic Tibetans, in a similar situation, have quite a reputation for robbing neighboring tribes of their livestock.

The nomadic way of life, the close contact with nature and dependence on nature promotes animism, shamanism, and spiritualism, which goes hand in hand with the prevailing religions of Islam (in the case of the Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Salars, and some Tibetan clans) and Buddhism (in the case of the Mongols, Tibetans, and Sarigh-Uighurs). As a general rule, the nomadic Kirghiz and Kazakh are not very fanatic or ardent Muslims, and neither are the Mongols very pious Buddhists, but still, both feel strongly about their religious although they are rather lax in their observance. No matter how poor a Buddhistic nomad is, he voluntarily supports and feeds wandering lamas, invites several on major occasions (birth, death, and marriage if the bride's father can afford it), pays them, and finally is accustomed to the old tradition ot giving a small percentage of his livestock every year to Buddhistic monasteries. All nomads are very superstitious, and the relationship between cause and effect is often misinterpreted, e.g., in the case of disease or weather. It is safe to say that the dominant motives of the nomads are economic in the first place and religious in the second place.

563 "chief-elder". The charismatic character of such an elder is of
622 prime importance. His wealth, his public influence, his reputa-
[554] tion, his military ability and his moral integrity form the basis of his social status.

692 Internal order is maintained by unwritten common law. Judges
563 act by custom and conscience alone. When a cause of action arises,
671 the litigants, in lieu of blood-vengeance, agree to refer the matter to a court of their own choosing and to abive by its decision. Either both sides agree on one or two bäks to settle the case, or each selects a bäk, and a third man is chosen as arbiter. Civil and criminal law are not distinguished. Crimes are really torts, and
[674] can be settled out of court by compromise. Hence, the criminal
[681] is not punished; he simply pays damages, which represent a sort of compounding of the earlier lex talionis. Custom prescribes a
681 graded schedule of damages, ranging from a wergild (kun) of 100
563 horses, 1000 sheep, or 50 camels for homicide, through lesser payments in cattle for adultery, fraud, and serious personal injuries or assault, to a horse and a robe or skin for slander, breaking a finger or tooth, and minor assaults. The full wergild must be paid for killing a man, one-half for a woman or slave, and one-third for a child under ten. The circumstances and intent are not considered. However, a man pays no penalty for killing his child, slave or adulterous wife. For cattle theft, a man must restore the stolen animals and, in addition, pay twice their number as damages. For rape of an unbetrothed girl he must marry the girl, give her father the usual bride-price, and pay him a fine of nine head of cattle.

563 Usually before a boy reaches the age of ten, his father seeks
584 a wife for him. Neither the boy nor the girl has much voice in
[614] the transaction. Since the nomadic Turks practice strict clan exogamy the boy's father must select a girl of suitable qualifications from another clan. He then sends matchmakers to her father to arrange the bride-price "kalym". Except where a
563 brother and sister are married by exchange to a sister and
583 brother, marriage is always by purchase. The bride-price,
584 payable in horses, cattle, sheep and camels, varies with the means of the groom and the desirability of the bride, forty animals representing perhaps an average kalym. In return, the bride takes with her from her father's home a dowry, much inferior in value, consisting usually of a yurt, a riding horse or other animals, a chest of clothing, rugs, beddings, and other household articles. Marriage is deferred until the children attain
[582] their majority.
[584]

B. The Western (Oirat) Mongols (See also IMAR, Social Structure)

563 175 After the decline of the Mongolian Empire in the 14th century, the Western Mongols (the tribes Choros, Khoit, Khoshut and Torgut) of Dzungaria established the so-called Oirat Federation. [671] Its social structure is best summarized in the Oirat codex Chaghajachi yin bichik "Book of the Judges", based on the Jassa of Chingis Khan.

563 596 [595] [671] [851] Life within the extended family is absolutely patriarchal. Although polygyny is not mentioned in the codex it is an accepted part of the society. The children of concubines are legitimate. The order of precedence among the children depends on the social status of their mothers.

563 428 After the father's death, the eldest son inherits everything, including the father's wives and concubines with the exception of his own mother. Inheritance as well as descent follows the male line.

563 614 583 Among the Western Mongols clan exogamy is strictly observed, especially among the Torguts and Khoshuts of Sinkiang. Marriage entails the payment of a bride-price of at least two horses, two cows and twelve sheep. The bride-price for an aristocratic girl is considerably higher and consists of several dozen camels, horses and sheep. If a wife is divorced she is not permitted to take with her anything which has been given to her by her husband.

563 631 According to the Chaghajachi-yin bichik the Oirats were organized into ail, khoshun (banners) and aimak. In Sinkiang there are two khoshun of Torguts, one khoshun of Khoshuts and seven khoshun of Uriangkhai. The Khoshuts of the Alashan Area and the Torguts of the Edsin Gol Area each constitute one khoshun. Each khoshun lives on land and pastures with well-defined boundaries.

563 565 The same source details the various strata of Oirat society. It subdivides the entire Oirat population into three groups. The nobility (taiji) belong to the first group, the darkhans (soldiers, warriors, flag-bearers who are tax-exempt people) belong to the second group, and the kara kümüm (plebians) belong to the third group. Cutting across these other divisions is the highly respected group of monks (Llama, Ho-brog or pandit) who are also tax-exempt.

563 565 554 The Oirat princes are subdivided into six different ranks: a) Ch'in-Wang b) Chün-Wang c) Beile c) Beise d) Chen-kuo-kung and f) Hu-kuo-kung. The Oirat taijis have four ranks, e.g., the ruling leader of a khoshun who is called khoshun-u jasak is a taiji of the first rank. Besides these ranks honorary titles exist such as: erdeni "jewel", darkhan "master", tüsiyetü "pillar, support", daiching "hero", dalai "ocean" and batur "hero" etc. [651] The Khoshun-u jasak is the ruler of his banner. Commoners pay him tribute in the form of cattle or agricultural products.

/The New Uighurs/

563 out clearly by the Orkhon inscriptions in which the Khaqan com-
121 plains bitterly of the Turkic susceptibility to Chinese culture,
175 and the rapid sinification of his people. In this sense, sinification meant that the Turkic tribes gradually gave up their nomadic life and settled in more permanent camp sites. These events had strong repercussions on Turkic social structure, which moved from kinship to function and territory. After the New Uighurs had been expelled from their ancestral lands by the Kirghiz in 840 A.D. they settled around the Tarim Basin. They had to [177] abandon their nomadic way of life and to learn Chinese irriga-tion practices in order to survive and to maintain a certain level of productivity.

563 Thus the New Uighurs established what may be called an
175 irrigation civilization. Class lines in New Uighur society became
565 more flexible. Whereas noble status was based on descent in
554 the nomadic era, high social prestige and, therefore, high status was now attained by wealth gained through efficient labor and irrigational practices. Nearly all the irrigation canals were dug by collective effort. However, the actual water right of each farmer was in proportion to the quantity of labor he contributed to the digging. Irrigation regulation was entirely a matter of self-government. The Mirab, or keeper [624] of the registry and person in charge of water distribution, and his assistant the Kokbeshi, were chosen by the village. This meant considerable social mobility, though traces of a more rigid class structure remain. For example, the Aqsaqal is the successor to the former tribal chieftain, but unlike the former he is chosen from among the villagers, and his office [771] is not hereditary as was that of the tribal leader. Class lines based on racial distinctions do not exist among the New Uighurs, since the unifying factor in the society is not race but religion. [582] Should a New Uighur marry a Chinese woman, she becomes a member of the community by "baptism."

563 The following distinctions may be noted in the New Uighur
565 class system as a whole:

1. [423] About two-thirds of the New Uighur population belongs to the small peasantry, holding title to one to three acres of irri-gated land. On rare occasions a small peasant may till up to thirty acres. Politically, this social stratum has little or no power, unless they participate as a group in a mass move-ment.

2. [423] About one-eighth of the New Uighur population belongs to the "landed gentry" holding title to fifty or more acres. All their land usually is rented to tenant farmers, who pay the landlord up to eighty per cent of the land's produce. Politi-cally, this segment of the New Uighur class structure is the strongest, or at least it was, prior to 1949. Usually the com-munal leaders are elected from this segment of the population.

S 563 178 [31] individual and the community. Natural resources to not seem to be of prime importance in Sinkiang. However, their exploitation through free or forced labor will further break down Uighur kinship ties and thereby alter the social structure. In recent S [464] times large numbers of non-Uighur laborers have been introduced into the area, further augmenting alien cultural elements.

S 563 438 622 Uighurs participating in small-scale home industries and handicrafts are organized under the leadership of a Chong-usta. Unlike the merchant's "guild" aqsaqal, he is not a public official.

S 563 554 [631] [647] [692] Under the Manchu system the Bŭks (communal leaders) were classed in five degrees of rank, ranging from the third to the seventh degree of the Chinese official scale. 1. Ak'im Bŭk- local governor; 2. Ishkhan Bŭk -Assistant Governor; 3. Shang Bŭk - Collector of Revenue; 4. Katsanatch'i Bŭk - same as above; 5. 'Hatze Bŭk - Judge; 6. Mirabu Bŭk - Superintendent of Agriculture.

S [312] As discussed previously, the Mirabu Bŭk was also the official having authority over water rights and water distribution. In practice the Manchu Amban, highest Manchu official in a given area, chose the Ak'im Bŭk who, in turn, chose his own subordinates.

S 563 241 554 Farm units were organized as follows: Ten such units were lead by an On-bashi, fifty by an Illik-bashi, one hundred by an Yüz-bashi. The duties of the Bŭks and Yüz-bashis mainly consisted of keeping and collecting registers and taxes. This governmental organization was abolished officially by the Chinese Revolution in 1911. However, traces of this structure are still found today.

S 563 668 177 The whole Uighur social structure certainly will undergo far-reaching changes under the Communist government. However, at this time only hypotheses about these changes can be advanced. As new cultural and political structures are imposed on the society, kinship ties will be further loosened. The Uighur communisty and its structure will take on new characteristics, as old institutions disappear and new ones are introduced. Except, perhaps, for the nuclear family, social groupings will be brought more and more into accordance with the new ideals of the society.

N B. The Sedentary Tibetans

*563 [592] [361] Much that has been said about the nomadic Tibetans holds equally true for their sedentary counterparts. Again the basic unit is the group of families living together. In the sedentary community, the village may be composed of from a dozen to seventy, eighty or even more houses arranged adjacent to each other. The roofs of the normally two-storied buildings N [342] are close enough to form a pathway, and are used as such.

THE FAMILY

S N 121 59 563 I. Introduction

Northwest China is heavily populated by national minorities. In the province of Sinkiang, the Chinese even form a minority group and the Turkic Moslems constitute the majority. Therefore, in a discussion of the family in this area, general statements applying to the population as a whole would not apply, but a distinction has to be made between several different ethnic elements.

For the purposes of the present section, the following rough division suggests itself: (a) Turkic sedentary Moslems; (b) Turkic nomadic Moslems; (c) the Dungans or Chinese Moslems; (d) the Tibetans; (e) the Mongours; (f) the Mongols, and (g) the Chinese. The last two groups are discussed in detail in their respective handbooks, the IMAR Handbook and the General Handbook of China.

S N 779 59 183 581 Among all Moslems Islam forms the ideal concept of the family. In Islamic society the institution of the family has always been one of primary importance. The family is considered the basic essential of human civilization. Having a family, and being a dutiful member of one, is not only regarded as necessary, but is expressly a religious obligation. Marriage, the step leading to the establishment of a family, is a sacred contract into which each Moslem must enter. A Moslem who, without just reason, does not marry and does not establish a family, is considered almost as a heretic. S N [589]

S N 59 182 [554] [589] The family's function is primarily for reproduction of the group and the continuation of the family. The institution of the family, furthermore, provides security and peace of mind for its members. The family man is respected and esteemed in Moslem society; he is considered honorable and trustworthy. An unmarried man is likely to be looked upon with some suspicion and distrust.

S N 59 779 183 Since the family plays such a significant role in Moslem society, there is great emphasis on its unity and closeness. This is probably best expressed in the following quotation from the Koran, "...and Allah has made wives for you from yourselves and has given you sons and daughters from your wives." This closeness resulting from the blood relationship is extended to all other phases of family life.

S N 593 Love and compassion should underlie all the relationships within the family. In relations between a man and his wife, or wives, between one kin to another, love is stressed as the basis.

S N [829] A man's behavior within his family reflects his attitude toward society as a whole. If there is love in his heart for his family, he will also have compassion for others and be of service to society.

S N 592 593 In the family, the man's position is always superior to that of the woman, regardless of his age. The wife is, accordingly, put in an inferior position to that of her husband, being under his control completely. The head of the house holds unquestioned authority

S 563 519 rites. Even the poor give Tomashan, evening parties, to enjoy themselves.

S 563 624 554 577 7. Guardians of national customs

In Sinkiang, as in most Moslem communities, there are Sheikh-I-Islam, or guardians of public customs and morals. The people elect them, and their title is sanctioned by the district Khukum-Kazay. They receive no pay, but they are accorded honor and respect. Their duties are to guard over the morals and customs of the people, and to inspect the quality of goods sold in the bazaars and protect the consumers' interests. In the old days, the Sheikh-I-Islam were also to see that the women veiled their faces and that the men attended the mosques.

E. The Kazakhs

S 563 K 193 1. The people

The Kazakhs are one of the important peoples in Sinkiang Province. They and the New Uighurs are often referred to as people of one origin. According to legend, the early ancestor of mankind had two sons. One was timid and mild, the other tough and quick-tempered. The timid son was diligent in farming, but the other had no interest in cultivating the land, so he was driven away from home. The son who stayed on the farm became the ancestor of the New Uighurs; the other, of the Kazakhs. Another legend has it that the Kazakhs of Sinkiang are descendants of the younger brother of Chingis Khan.

S 563 K 526 [131] [241] The Kazakhs are nomads who have settled in the northern part of this region, northwest of Ili. Few of them farm. They are noted for their horsemanship. Children begin riding when they are very young, and little boys and girls are fastened to their parents' horses so they will become accustomed to all kinds of techniques, tricks and fast riding.

S 563 K 771 782 The people belong to the Islam faith. Because of their nomadic way of life they have few mosques. They pray at definite times, wherever it is convenient, always standing to face Mecca.

2. Patterns of living

a. Dwelling

S 563 K 221 As the people lead a nomadic life, they have definite periods in the yearly cycle for moving their tents. During the summer they journey from one pasture to another; in autumn they are busy shearing the sheep, stringing the hay, harvesting crops and preparing their winter quarters; the winter is the time for rest and relaxation.

S 563 K 342 During the summer they need light-weight tents. The shape of the Kazakh summer tent is similar to that of the Mongols, except that the Mongolian yurt has a round top and the Kazakh tent has a curved tip. This difference can be noted from afar.

The winter dwellings of the Kazakhs are permanent buildings

SN 795 621 793

/Chinese Moslems/

The Chinese Moslem community differs from the Turkic Moslem community mainly in the organization of the community around the mosque and in the peculiar position the ahung holds in the community. The ahung holds the central position in both the religious and the social life. In principle, the Islamic community has no professional priests, but in China the ahung has actually taken the place of one. The Imam, whose office is important in Western Asia and Eastern Turkestan, where he has leadership in religious life, has lost his pre-eminent position in China. So has the Muazzin (the one who calls people for prayer) and the Mufti (the teacher of law). At present these positions have been practically abolished. Those who hold the title have no particular importance in the community. These titles are inherited and are not conferred by virtue of any knowledge of Islamic affairs. The ahung is the only real Moslem scholar in the Chinese Moslem community. He is nominated to this position by virtue of his knowledge of the details and philosophy of the religion. He trains students, the Khalifa, to become the future ahungs and to continue to maintain Islamic life in China.

SN [554]

G. Chinese Moslem Sects

SN 795 185 [175]

After the pilgrims had established some contact with the rest of the Moslem world, there were attempts, many of them springing in the Northwest, to reform Islam in China. The first well-known attempt of this sort was made by Muhammad Amin, known in China as Ma Ning-hsia, who in 1781 appeared among the Salars and introduced some reforms concerning the rituals of Islam, correcting some of the practices which seemed not to be in accordance with those he had observed in Mecca.

However, of all the most notoriously successful is the sect of Ma Hua-lung, the hsin-chiao or the new doctrine, as contrasted with the traditional religion practiced by the Chinese Moslems, Lao-chiao or the old doctrine.

SN 795 792 185

The new sect is to be set apart from the rest of Islam in China. In spite of the Islamic Chinese tradition regarding religious leaders, their being chosen by the community to serve it, and known only to their adherents, Ma Hua-lung's name was known far beyond his immediate followers. To some he was a prophet, and others detested him as an impostor.

The nature of Ma Hua-lung's teachings still remains somewhat of a mystery. There is a tendency to regard them as endorsements of Shi'ism, or perhaps as an unusually bold representation of Sufism (mysticism in Islam). However, the notices of D'Ollone show that actually they are genuinely Sunni in character and not a variety of the mystical philosophy widely diffused throughout Central Asia. Ma Hua-lung was regarded as an incarnation of the Spirit—a sheng jen (holy man, prophet)

S 829 668 177 /Turks of Sinkiang/

fication of a non-Moslem is not likely to be a very spontaneous movement on the part of the Turkic people, nor is it conceivable that they "deeply love and warmly support the Central People's Government." To most of them it is a remote government in a foreign country - China - to which most of them have never been, and it is very difficult for them to visualize it as the government to whom they owe supreme allegiance.

S 631 554 668 177 829

Direct authority is represented by the local government bodies. Although composed of many Chinese officials, the representatives of the local population fill prominent positions in the local government also. There is a certain amount of pride felt by the local people owing to the fact that some of the important leaders are Turkic Moslems, who have achieved a position of importance in the government. It is quite likely that leaders like Burkhan and Saifuddin are quite popular among the Turks of Sinkiang. The Turkic refugees abroad and the strongly nationalistic-minded ones who still are in Sinkiang, look at these leaders participating in the Chinese Communist regime as traitors cooperating with the oppressive powers, rather than national heroes.

II. The Mongols of the Northwest

A. Introductory Remarks

N *563 [36] [162]

Northwest China is the arena for some 150,000 Mongolian herdsmen. Although uniform in respect to their Buddhistic-nomadic culture and language (with the exception of the Monguors who speak a Mongolian-Tibetan mixed dialect) they do not constitute a political or areal unit, living as they do thousands of miles apart, in the northeastern area of Sinkiang, around the Tsaidam swamps area, in the Edzingol area, in the northern part of Kansu and even in some enclaves in Shensi. Since Chingis Khan, they have never constituted a political unit, although Legdan Khan united the major parts of them into a short-lived empire (see Historical Setting).

S 563 [361] [162]

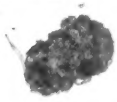
The reason for this lack of unity is first and above all, the fact that the Mongols of the Northwest area are outnumbered by Chinese (30 million) and Turks (4 million). The second reason is the treatment by the Manchus who shifted the Mongol banners from place to place in connection with the Manchu, Sibo, and Solon banners, who constituted the main and more reliable garrisons in the frontier area. The reliability of the Mongolian garrisons was partly due to the policy toward the banner and tribal leaders who were made wang (king) or nobles of various ranks.

B. Views of the People with Respect to their own Country

N *563 829

The average Mongol of the Northwest is fully aware of the fact that he belongs to a minority and that all he possesses are his

S 563 829



/Mongols of the Northwest/

These feelings and emotional attitudes were hardly sufficient to arouse animosity or hatred toward the Chinese but rather an unjustified and unwarranted feeling of superiority. The progressive advancement of Chinese settlers, however, who gradually took over lot after lot of their pasture land led not only to hatred but resulted in petty uprisings, so that even the Manchu government several times issued laws against Chinese advancements, which were hardly ever observed. Complaints of the Mongol leaders did not help and they were numerically too weak for military action.

Only in the case of the sedentary Mongols of the Northwest, the Monguors, such problems never arose, as they had become so strongly sinified that their tribal leaders were considered by the Chinese themselves as Chinese officials with a reputation of absolute loyalty.

D. Attitudes toward the Communist Regime

Throughout the history of the Mongols, their pattern of living, internal and external, changed very little. Their families constituted auls, the auls, clans and the clans, tribes. Besides this structural organization, there existed the military institutions of banners and leagues. The internal order was always strict and the laws and regulations hard. A leader who was not strict and hard would hardly be considered as a leader and the history of the Mongols shows that a strong leader always evoked their respect and found them to be submissive followers.

In view of this fact there is little doubt that the Mongols of the Northwest will respect the iron hand of Peking, even though probably with mixed emotions. The creation of autonomous chous (districts) populated only or overwhelmingly by Mongols might give them a certain feeling of self-determination and cultural autonomy. The organization of veterinarian stations which take care of their livestock will certainly be welcome to the nomads; the organization of a widespread educational system might be another asset for the Communists as it fosters Mongolian language and promotes literature written in Mongolian. The establishment of permanent winter sites, on the other hand, which is contradictory to Mongol customs and above all the threatening collectivization of their livestock, which is the Mongols' highest and greatest treasure, are negative aspects. This, of course, refers to the present generation only. The younger and youngest generation, subject to a very vivid and propagandistic education will undoubtedly change their attitude toward the present regime, a process for which the Khalkhas of Outer Mongolia are a classic example. (see also IMAR Handbook, same section).

III. The Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans

An attempt at a cohesive description of popular attitudes among

/Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans/

because there is nothing for which to exchange it. Once a week a caravan carrying Government supplies deposits a bag of flour at the door. This is the subsidy granted to them, in exchange of which her husband is bound to be at his post all through the year, and keep the well from being choked by sand. She has never thought in terms which refer to anything except meals, births and occasionally deaths. Her boys may go farther afield, and if they do, she knows that they will never return, but after a time she will become accustomed to their absence and it will not trouble her again."

With spiritual senses dormant, mental powers arrested and physical demands reduced to the minimum, wherein shall a human being show that he differs from the beasts whose conditions he shares? There is hardly anything which can be called attitudes or reactions.

About the Chinese-speaking Moslems Miss Cable reports that Chinese travelers avoid any inn operated by Moslems because of the rudeness to which they may be subjected when using it. This is a very particular observation, as in other places in the Northwest, non-Moslem Chinese prefer to go to Mohammedan restaurants, which are famed for their cleanliness and tasty food. In many places Moslems have monopolized the innkeeper business, so that they cannot possibly be avoided. Even the Chinese guests abstain from eating pork during their stay, every pot and pan which they possess is considered unclean and will not be allowed inside the kitchen. This is not conducive to good feeling between host and guest, and may at any time lead to high words and even to blows. Toward known westerners the Moslems' attitude is somewhat different, and more tolerant. Cable records the experience of her party in staying in an inn with the sign of "Pure and True Religion" by saying, "The attitude toward our party was different because, though we were styled kaper (infidel) we were known to keep a 'clean' kitchen, which is to say that pork, lard, and every produce of the pig was rigidly excluded from our menu. We were 'infidels of the book' for the Bible and not the Koran was our guide, but we were not 'infidels of the pig' which was an insult reserved for eaters of unclean food. The closest watch was kept upon us as we journeyed, and any lapse or laxity would have been reported to every mosque on our route, so that 'pure religion' inns would have been closed to us. Moslems acknowledged that we were as free from idolatry as themselves, but openly stigmatized us as blasphemers, for we called the prophet Jesus 'Son of God', and the innkeeper turned aside to spit whenever he heard the word." (pp. 72-73). The Moslems who are of means like to make others understand that they are wealthy people. "Like other Tungan landlords to whose houses we had the entree, he left us with a sense that he was very wealthy and that his

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/Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans/

apparent trade of innkeeping was simply a cover for another and more lucrative business." (p. 73).

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Like the Chinese, the sinicized Moslems are very much concerned with the problem of offspring. To them continuity of life is bound up with that prolongation of existence which a son secures, one who carries on the life which he owes to his parents. This is a completely Chinese concept. The Chinese-speaking Moslems cannot understand and would certainly not accept the Christian faith that life after death is God's gift, that one does not depend upon a son and his worship, and that immortality means the soul or spirit living eternally in Heaven. Miss Cable records in her book: "We talked often of these things, but it was hard for them to understand what I told them, and they would turn it off with one excuse or another. 'She is different from us', they said, 'her life is given up to God's work and her merit will secure her an entrance to Paradise'. Some envied, some pitied, some just stared and made no effort to understand, others summed it up in these words: 'Eastern ways are for the East, Western ways are for the West.'" (p. 75).

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The Chinese-speaking Moslems in the Northwest, in spite of their having taken up a considerable amount of the Chinese way of life, are deeply conscious of racial and religious inadaptability to Chinese rules. Most of them are always rebellious. They alwasy think that they are oppressed or unfairly treated by the Chinese authorities. For this reason, Moslem revolts occur in the Northwest frequently. For example, the immediate cause of the the 1930 revolt was, according to Miss Cable's account, the suspicion of the Moslems that the Chinese Government was to change their age-old social and political system and that the Chinese population in the area goat many advantages at the expense of the Moslems. Up to 1930 the Moslems in the Hami district of Sinkiang were always governed by a ruler of their own race, religion and speech. The last one of their rulers was Khan Maksud Shah. This ruler died during the year 1930. The Chinese Sinkiang Government took this opportunity to end the Moslem system and the succession of the Khan was not allowed to continue. Maksud's son, Nazir, heir to the throne was summoned to report at Urumchi, then capital of the Sinkiang Provincial Government, and Yolbars, the Tiger Prince, was ordered to appear with him. This was bad news for the Moslem inhabitants. Later, a word came from the capital that the young prince had been made a prisoner in his own lodging, and that there were to be many changes in the standing of the Turki people. When Yolbars returned to Hami he left Nazir in Urumchi, and arrived in company with a band of Chinese officials who at once sat down to business and drew up a list of changes which were to be introduced in the administration of the Moslem community. The old administration

attempts of the native peoples to throw off the Chinese yoke and to set up their own government, a story of intrigue and bloodshed, set against the backdrop of international rivalry.

In the past thirty years, superimposed on the political and international complex of Sinkiang were the new ideas that have added fuel to the discords and discontent in Sinkiang. Generally, the more important of the new ideologies injected into the political life of Sinkiang were the following:

1. Policy of assimilation, generally denounced by its enemies as the Great Hanism (Ta-Han chu-i), in which the border peoples were regarded as descendants of an ancient Great Chinese race and should be reabsorbed into the Chinese race. This concept was pushed by the Kuomintang extremists.
2. Program of cultural diversity and cultural autonomy. This idea was pushed by men such as Sheng Shih-ts'ai and Chang Chih-chung, as an alternative to the policy of compulsory assimilation.
3. Pan-Turkestanism and Pan-Islamism, promoted by the native people, especially by the Uighurs and their Kazakh allies, stressed the fact that the majority of people of Sinkiang speak Turkic language and belong to the Moslem faith. The exponents of this concept belong to many shades of political opinion, from the moderates such as Maksud Sabri, Burkhan Shahidi, and Mehmet Emin Bughra, to the more radical faction which included Akhmejan Kasimi, Saifuddin Azizi, and the members of the Kulja coalition.
4. Territorial and cultural autonomy under the principle of federalism based on ideas derived from the Soviet policy towards the minority nationalities. This policy was actively propagandized by the Chinese Communists and served to inflame the native peoples as well as to embarrass the Nationalist authorities.

These divergent views, in substance, were the expressions of nationalism on the part of the Chinese and on the part of the native peoples of Chinese Turkestan, especially among the educated classes. As in many other parts of the Orient, the game of politics was not a popular one. The people, downtrodden and persecuted, desired only to be left alone, and they rose in revolt only when tyranny and injustice became intolerable, and they would then follow the cue of their leaders in wholesale uprisings. In the wars of the Oirats against the Ch'ing government two hundred years ago, the leaders were the tribal chieftains; and in the rebellion of the Khojas and the Dungan rebellion in the last century, the leaders were religious prelates. But in republican times, there were few of the hereditary tribal princes or religious leaders taking a part. Instead, the leaders were drawn from the ranks of the bandits, officers in the Chinese army, or young intellectuals who had studied in China or abroad. On the part of the Chinese, the men in political life in the Northwest were either local civil and military officials, or officials sent out by the central government.

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*668 Even with the advent of the Chinese Communists, there was
554 little fundamental change in the composition of the panel of men
S in the political arena of the Northwest. The men who acquiesced
668 to the Communists and were retained in office as well as those who
• 554 opposed the Communists were the same men who had been in the
political limelight in the past. Some of the men sent out by the
Communist Central People's Government were the same men who
had been sent out in the past by the Nationalists. The names of
local Communist officials appeared to be new, but actually many
of them had been in the Northwest for a long time, working in the
underground. The old and the new, the local and the Peking-ap-
pointed, were all worked into the Administrative Council of the
S Northwest and the provincial governments. The general election
N of 1954 resulted in a reshuffle of the political figures of the North-
[666] west, but not in a basic change in the composition.

N The situation in the northwestern provinces was in a state of
*668 flux in 1949 prior to the actual occupation by the Chinese Commun-
*175 ists who were then in the process of conquering all of mainland
669 China. In May, Sian was occupied by Chinese Communist troops,
S who were posed for their westward advance to gain control of Ning-
668 hsia, Chinghai (both of which soon fell to Communist arms), and
669 Sinkiang.
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S Out in the west, Sinkiang was divided into two political regimes:
669 the adherents of the provincial government and the insurrectionists
175 in Ili. At Urumchi was the headquarters of the Chinese Nationalist
631 Army, under the command of T'ao Chih-yüeh, and the provincial
635 government headed by Burkhan Shahidi, a Russianized Uighur, who
554 was then middle-of-the-road in politics and who represented the
large Uighur population. With him was Mehmet Emin Bughra, who
had played a part in the establishment of the East Turkestan Repub-
lic of 1933 (at Kashgar) as well as in the East Turkestan Republic
of 1944 (at Kulja in Ili). Politically, they cooperated with the
Nationalist Government and they sought only a modicum of liberties,
such as the establishment of a government of their own choosing
and the preservation of their languages, culture and traditions.
They were thus a less militantly revolutionary group than the Ili
faction. In September, 1949, with the defeat of the Nationalists on
the mainland, with the Chinese Communist Army preparing to
march into Sinkiang, and with the persuasion of such men as
Chang Chih-shung, the provincial government under Burkhan and
the Nationalist forces under T'ao Chih-yüeh formally submitted to
the Communists.

The revolutionary movement centered around Kulja was, since
1948, quiescent, rendered impotent by internal dissensions and
the defection of some of its leaders, including Osman Batur. To
recoup their fortunes, Akhmejan Kasimi and his lieutenant,
Saifuddin, organized the Sinkiang League for the Defense of Peace

669 and Democracy and began to make overtures to the Chinese Com-
175 munists. In September, 1949, Akhmejan Kasimi was killed in a
631 plane crash en route to attend the Chinese People's Political Con-
635 sultative Conference convened by the Chinese Communists.
554 Saifuddin, who was already friendly to the Communists and who may have been an undercover Communist agent, became the head of the Sinkiang League, bringing it formally into the Communist fold and using it to assist the Communist takeover of northern Sinkiang.

175 Even with the submission of civil and military dignitaries of
631 both factions, the situation in Sinkiang was delicate, due to the
635 strong growth of Soviet Russian influence in the political vacuum
648 following the withdrawal of Nationalist power. Actual authority
669 rested in the hands of the Soviet consul-general at Urumchi, the Soviet consul at Kulja, and the secretary-general of the Turkestan branch of the Communist Party. The district of Ili was reported to be wholly Russianized, and by April, 1949, according to Urumchi police records, 6,200 natives changed their nationality to become Soviet citizens. (Mehmet Emin Bughra, Doghr Turkestan, (Eastern Turkestan), pp. 83-4, and interview with Isa Yussuf Aliptakin, in NYT, March 23, 1951). The Chinese Communists were obliged to proceed with caution in their advance on and occupation of Sinkiang.

II. United Front Work, 1. Political Leaders and Factions

175 The fact that the provincial leaders of the Northwest peacefully
668 submitted to the Chinese Communists, bringing the areas under
669 their control along with them and thus sparing the Communists of the effort and cost of a military campaign, posed for the Communist leaders acute problems of absorption and disposition of the local officials. As a reward for their defection to the Communist cause, even though it was, for some of them, at the eleventh hour, they had to be retained in office. However, it was also necessary to reward the Communist officials, who had been working in the underground, as well as the officers of the Communist army, and at the same time, it was necessary to establish control by the Communists over the local functionaries.

175 The Communists, long anticipating this problem, had a ready-
668 made solution. This was the United Front, when applied to everyone in general, and the "democratic coalition" when applied to different factions working together for the Communist government.

"The aims of the Chinese People's Central Government vis-a-vis the Northwest," stated Wang Chen (commander of the Communist forces which entered Sinkiang and concurrently secretary of the Sinkiang Su? bureau of the CCP), were "first, to establish people's provincial governments made up of democratic coalition of all nationalities; second, to enlist progressive elements of all nation-

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175 alities and classes to participate in the governments; and third,
668 to establish people's democratic United Front of democratic nationalities under the leadership of the people's provincial governments and various branches of the CCP committees." (JMJP Oct. 1, 1950).

In response, the people's council of Sinkiang passed a resolution urging the establishment of a people's democratic dictatorship based on a union of all democratic classes and all nationalities, built around the alliance of workers and farmers. This was to be achieved by the establishment and consolidation of the united front, by the annihilation of reactionary elements, by the re-education and reform of former government functionaries and by the absorption of progressive elements into the government.

The extent to which the Chinese Communists succeeded in implementing their policy of a United Front in Northwest China may be seen in (1), the alignment of the top ranking officials and the parties, (2) the mobilization of the people, and (3) the building of an army of trained men - the cadres - to serve as instruments of Communist policy.

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*175 A. Top Echelon Officials
*668 The men in power in the northwestern provinces at the time
554 of the Communist takeover belonged to an assortment of political
635 factions and held to a hodge-podge of views and interests. There were the Communists, many of whom had held official positions
S in the Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia Border Region, who were immedi-
175 ately summoned to take charge. There were the members of the
668 Democratic League, which had thrown in their lot with the Com-
554 munists and which maintained branch offices in Sian and Lanchou.
635 The Nationalist officials in China Proper who defected formed themselves into the Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee and they were joined by the Nationalist officials in the Northwest. Among the national minorities, there were those who held responsible positions under the Nationalists and who, as prominent men among the national minorities, were carefully preserved by the Communists. Another group of native leaders who rose to power were the former participants of the Ili revolt.

The administrative structure formed from these varied political groups was a cunning piece of assembly. The non-Communist figures had to be given conspicuous display in order to give the impression of a coalition government, but their line had to be stiffened by Communist officials so that it would answer to the dictates of Peking. Each of the top-ranking officials held three or more concurrent positions in one or more places.
Political: in the Central People's Government, in the regional Military and Administrative Council (later the Administrative Council), in the provincial or the municipal governments.

N Military: In the People's Revolutionary Military Council, the
*175 Northwest Military District, or the provincial sub-districts.
*668 Party: In the Central Committee of the CCP, in the Northwest
554 Bureau of the Central Committee and the Sinkiang Sub-bureau, and
635 in the provincial committees.
S Mass organizations: In the national committee and in regional
175 committees.
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The positions held were either vertical, from Peking down to
• 554 the provincial level, or horizontal, in more than one collateral
635 agencies. The system of interlocking political positions may be seen in the cases of the following men, chosen at random as illustrations. The positions they held were as of 1952:

Hsi Chung-hsün: In Peking, he was a member of the Government Administration Council, member of the People's Revolutionary Military Council, and a member of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association. In the Northwest, he was vice-chairman of the Military Administrative Council, director of the Commission of Land Reform, deputy director of the Commission on Culture and Education, and political commissar of the Northwest Military District. In the Party, he was an alternate member of the Central Committee, and first secretary of the Northwest Bureau.

Ma Wen-jui is primarily concerned with party work. In the Northwest Military and Administrative Council, in which he is a member of the council, he was chairman of the People's Supervisory Commission and member of the Commission on Political and Legal Affairs. In the party, he was concurrently director of the Organization Department of the Northwest Bureau of the Central Committee and director of the Committee on Women's Work.

S Saifuddin Azizi, chairman of the Sinkiang People's Democratic
175 League, was also a member of the Northwest Military and Admin-
668 istrative Council and a member of its Political and Legal Commis-
554 sion and its Nationality Affairs Commission, which have offices in
635 Sian. In Sinkiang he was vice-chairman of the Provincial People's Government and fourth secretary of the Sinkiang Sub-bureau of the CCP. In Peking, he was a member of the Central Peoples Government Council, a member of the Political and Legal Commission and vice-chairman of the Nationality Affairs Commission. He was also reportedly commander of the 5th Army in Sinkiang.

S Among the non-Communists, the men who had climbed the
N highest in the Communist hierarchy were the members of the
175 Democratic League. One of these was Han Chao-e who, in Peking,
554 was a member of the Central Committee of the Democratic League,
635 a member of the Central Committee of the China Farmers' and Workers' Democratic Party, and a member of the People's Supervisory Commission in the Central People's Government. In the Northwest Military and Administrative Council, he was a member of the Political and Legal Commission and vice-chairman of the Land Reform Commission.